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The Commonwealth's eleven Independent Living Centers (ILCs) play a key role in assisting people with disabilities to maximize their independence and self-determination in all of life's activities. This includes a focus on assisting people to move from institutions into the community, and to attain personal goals related to independence and self-sufficiency. As consumer-controlled organizations, this work is done through a wide range of services which are based on a peer role modeling approach.

Federal statute dictates the composition and activities of ILCs, and require all ILCs to provide five 'core services'. Many ILCs provide other services, including Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services, Transition to Adulthood services, Transitional Internship Programs, Options Counseling and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living services with funding from the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. During Federal Fiscal Year 2016 (FFY16) most of the ILCs also provided Transition Coordination under the Money Follows the Person Demonstration grant. This grant is ending soon, and new enrollments ended in August 2016.

The ILCs are core members of the eleven Aging and Disability Resource Consortia. Through this model they work in close partnership with their local Aging Service Access Points as well as other community providers to provide consumer access to services through a "No Wrong Door" approach; creating a seamless, coordinated system of information and access to community based long term services and supports.

The core Independent Living services are:

Peer Counseling – the opportunity to learn from the experience of other people with disabilities who are leading productive and meaningful lives in their communities. Peer counseling issues include: personal growth, problem solving, disclosure, socializing or other issues faced specifically by persons with disabilities.

Skills Training – the acquisition of skills needed for living independently, such as how to find housing, manage PCA services, budgeting, self-advocacy or managing entitlements or benefits.

Information and Referral – providing information and referrals related to disability such as where to look for accessible housing, adaptive equipment, medical providers, legal assistance and a numerous other programs and resources.

Advocacy – helping persons with disabilities to know and assert their rights in areas such as the health care system, landlords, accessing financial benefits and in the community in general.

Transition services – This is a new core service for Independent Living Centers which was established under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in December 2015.

Transition services include:

1. Assisting individuals with disabilities to transition from institutions to the community;
2. Assisting individuals who are at risk of entering institutions so that they may remain in the community; and
3. Facilitating the transition of youth with disabilities from special education to postsecondary life.

Information on the services and achievements of the Independent Living Centers in FFY16 is provided below. This information is based on reports filed by the ILCs for the federal fiscal year (10/1/15 – 9/30/16), the last 12 month period of ILC performance available.

FFY16 Independent Living Center activity

27,921 consumers requested and received services from the ILCs in FFY16. The specific services requested and received were:

Services	Consumers Requesting Services	Consumers Receiving Services
Peer Counseling Services	1,383	1,366
IL Skills Training	8,474	8,438
Information and Referral	11,638	11,593
Advocacy/Legal Services	2,633	2,591
Personal Assistance Services	11,656	11,543
Housing, Home Modifications	1,141	1,122
Assistive Technology	791	719
Youth Transition Services	779	719
Transportation Services	253	236
Other – Service Coordination, Options Counseling, etc.	5,711	5,660

Assisting individuals to transition from institutions to the community is an integral element of the ILCs' mission. In FFY16 the total number of consumers assisted with this goal were:

Relocation from a Nursing Home or Institution to Community-Based Living		
Goal Set	Goal Achieved	In Progress
755	247	376

The Independent Living Centers assist individuals with identifying and working towards other personal goals, which are identified in each individual's Independent Living Plan. The types of goals and achievements during FFY16 were as follows:

Significant Life Area	Goals Set	Goals Achieved	In Progress
Self-Advocacy/Self-Empowerment	1,588	598	893
Communication	474	165	314
Mobility/Transportation	974	368	525
Community-Based Living	1,352	666	689
Educational	684	161	464

Vocational	886	231	587
Self-care	13,228	7,505	12,017
Information Access/Technology	1,047	466	577
Personal Resource Management	1,702	580	1,011
Transition from Institution to Community	755	247	376
Community/Social Participation	2,505	758	1,567